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Dear Tuscaffiliates—A Note from Eric

On becoming younger as I get older

The Tuscarawas Philharmonic Children's Chorus began rehearsals in October—this year, on Halloween itself—with intensive one-hour morning rehearsal for something like six or eight Saturdays. This aspect of the music director job was a surprise to me when I stepped into the role about two decades ago, and I went into my first rehearsal more than a little nervous. Up to that point in my career, I had worked primarily with high school students, and with some middle schoolers in a week-long music camp; but younger kids, and singers to boot—this was new territory for me. I knew enough about teaching young voices to know that I didn't know nearly enough about teaching young voices.

But, into the rehearsal I went with a sense of humor I hoped would be disarming. A roomful of pre-adolescents is one thing, but if they are not disarmed—look out! I was surprised and delighted to discover how much fun it was. I'm still trying to figure out what to do with all of those arms.

So it has begun this year, and I think I am enjoying the experience even more as I grow older.

It allows me to be a fool who has, really, a two-fold job: 1) teach music to kids and 2) make them laugh. A fool committed to joy and music. Some of the kids have sung in the group for years, and it is a special relationship that has grown between us—a deep love and trust. The deal is this: you come to rehearsal, pay attention, and I'll make it fun and productive. You enjoy the experience and show it by smiling and singing, and I'll fall in love again and look forward to doing so for years to come.

It's all I hope for any rehearsal or concert — for it to be fun and worthwhile.



Eric Benjamin
Conductor

Yuletide Celebration: Christmas Down the Years

December 12, 2015 • 7:30 PM • Kent State Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center

TIMELESS HOLIDAY TREASURES—During a July heat wave in Woodbury, Connecticut, composer Leroy Anderson was digging trenches in search of buried pipes that would lead him to an underground spring. It was in these conditions the idea for "Sleigh Ride" blossomed, although he wouldn't finish writing the piece until later after he had moved to Brooklyn. He completed it in time to premier in the Boston Pops Orchestra's 1948 season, but Anderson never intended the piece as a holiday song—it was meant merely to represent a full winter season. Later, Mitchell Parish would add lyrics to the tune, and now "Sleigh Ride" is consistently on the Top 10 list of Christmas songs worldwide.

"White Christmas" is another holiday classic

written under less than chilly conditions. As the story goes, Irving Berlin was staying in a Hollywood retreat in 1940 and feeling nostalgic when he declared to his secretary, "Grab your pen and take down this song. I just wrote the best song I've ever written — heck, I just wrote the best song that anybody's ever written!" The opening lyrics reveal his feelings at the time—"The sun is shining, the grass is green, the orange and palm trees sway. There's never been such a day in Beverly Hills, L.A. But it's December the twenty-fourth, And I am longing to be up North...."

Special guest Ronald Barkett will join us for our *Yuletide Celebration* as we carry on the traditions of these timeless classics. You won't want to miss it.



A
CONVERSATION
WITH
RON BARKETT

—CHRISTMAS
MEMORIES

As we celebrate **Christmas Down the Years**, we asked Ron Barkett a few questions about some of his fondest Christmas memories and how he enjoys celebrating the holidays today. Here is what he had to say:

■ As a boy growing up in Dover, what are some of your fondest Christmas memories?

I grew up in the 1960s. My mother and father, Bill and Rose Barkett, had 5 children, and I was the third. At one time they had 4 children, 4 years old and under. Oh, my.

When I was a small boy, we went to Gramma and Grampa's house on Christmas Eve. It wasn't exactly "over the river and through the woods," but more like over the alley and through the lawn. They lived next door. I have fond memories of growing up in Dover next to my grandparents. As many people know, my father, Bill, worked for his father, Domet; and all of us kids worked for him at one time or another, too. I got to know all of my extended family as they visited my parents and grandparents.

Christmas was sort chaotic of course, with five children. We would wake up mom and dad way too early on Christmas morn to see what Santa brought us in our stockings and under the tree. We would then eat breakfast and go to mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

■ Do you recall favorite Christmas music from your childhood?

My parents were not musicians, but they enjoyed music and encouraged all of us. I

remember listening to opera with my Dad when I was young. My older brother, Jim, and sister, Donna, played instruments, and my younger sister, Gina, sang. In fact, I remember talking my brother, Tom, into going caroling at Christmas time to our older neighbors. I had great opportunities to perform at St Joseph's, and as I got older I got to be quite ecumenical, singing at churches of all denominations.

■ As a father, what traditions did you help pass on to your children?

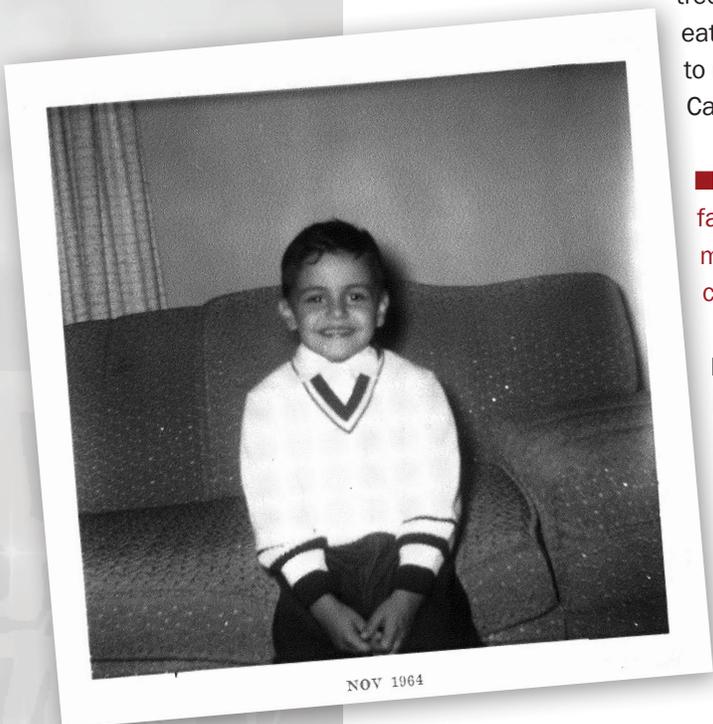
As my children grew, they all participated in music at church. Anthony, Mark and Maria all played handbells and brass choir at Christmas time, and Maria sang. This has brought me great joy. I'm so grateful that they shared my love for music nurtured, as I was, in the Dover Schools.

■ Music is such an integral part of your daily life—what is some of your favorite Christmas music?

I particularly enjoy sacred music celebrating the birth of Jesus, especially "O Holy Night," along with all of the traditional carols and hymns. I also like some of the more recent compositions. A favorite is "You're a Mean One, Mister Grinch," which is fun to sing.

Christmas has always been a busy time for me as a musician. In fact the first time I soloed with the Tuscarawas Philharmonic was probably for a presentation of Handel's *Messiah* at Christmas time some 30 years ago.

Young Ron Barkett, November 1964



Join the Tuscarawas Philharmonic
for our annual performance selections from

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Sunday • December 6 • 3:00 p.m.

First United Church of Christ
201 Fair Avenue NW, New Philadelphia
No admission charge.

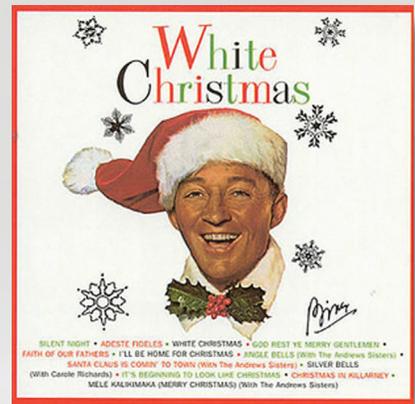
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Give the Gift of Music

For the music lovers on your shopping list, consider a contribution to the Tuscarawas Philharmonic. Make a donation in their name, and they'll become part of our growing list of contributors, making possible our performance and educational programming. It's a gift that will last throughout the year!

Contribute online in just a few easy and secure steps, or make your donation by mail. Please consider being a part of the Philharmonic family. It is truly a community treasure—
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“WHITE CHRISTMAS”—While Bing Crosby's recording has sold more than 100 million copies worldwide, taking its place in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the song has been recorded again and again. Just for fun, here is a short list of artists adding the timeless song to their holiday repertoire:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Perry Como | Barbara Steisand |
| Earnest Tubb | Otis Redding |
| Eddie Fisher | The Partridge Family |
| The Drifters | Willie Nelson |
| Elvis Presley | New Kids On the Block |
| Johnny Matthis | Garth Brooks |
| Dean Martin | Chicago |
| Ella Fitzgerald | Bette Midler |
| Mitch Miller | The Moody Blues |
| Robert Goulet | Diana Krall |
| Andy Williams | Taylor Swift |
| Smokey Robinson | Al Jarreau |
| The Beach Boys | Boy George |
| Doris Day | Lady Gaga |
| The Supremes | Rod Stewart |
| Bob Marley | Idina Menzel |

Gift certificates for concert tickets make excellent stocking stuffers!

February 13

THE MAGICAL MUSIC OF DISNEY

Beloved music from Disney films performed live by the Philharmonic while animation selections from *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King* and other favorites are projected on the screen. A warm fuzzy of a Valentine for your entire family. Don't get a babysitter—get tickets!

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The Philharmonic is as old as... music in 1935

1935 was an active year in the world of music. Here is just a sample of what was going on the year the Philharmonic was formed:



Frank Sinatra began his professional singing career

Cole Porter published "Begin the Beguine"

Rogers and Hart published "My Romance"

Sergei Prokofiev premiered his *Violin Concerto No. 2*

William Walton premiered his *Symphony No. 1*

Porgy and Bess, by George Gershwin, opened on Broadway

"Cheek to Cheek" by Fred Astaire was No. 1 on the song charts



Shirley Temple's "On the Good Ship Lollipop" was #3



The musicals *Top Hat* and *Curly Top* were released in theaters to appreciative audiences

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